FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Resources and Development Committee approves report regarding conditions of Water Resources Department field offices

MANY FARMS, Ariz. – On Tuesday, the Resources and Development Committee received a report from the Navajo Nation Department of Water Resources director Najam H. Tariq, regarding the conditions of the facilities and the Water Management Plan under the Technical, Construction, and Operations Branch.

Tariq, requested to replace the Many Farms Irrigation Office along with other field offices throughout various locations in the Navajo Nation that are in need of new buildings.

"We have a list here of buildings that are not safe and these are all field office buildings. These are the buildings where we provide direct services to our local Navajo Chapter communities and our local people. This office alone takes care of all the irrigation systems throughout various parts of the Navajo Nation," stated Tariq.

Prior to the meeting, Tariq took the RDC members on a tour of the Many Farms Irrigation office which has a missing roof on the shop building.

"I was appalled when I stopped here, one day, and asked to use the facilities and to see the conditions that we subject our employees to," stated RDC chair Council Delegate Katherine Benally (Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Kayenta).

According to the report, due to the severity of drought conditions that have significantly impacted the Navajo communities and livestock, the TCOB is currently constructing, repairing, maintaining livestock and irrigation water systems, which includes the proposed construction of new field offices.

"Like any other chapter, especially Many Farms Chapter, we need water. Please somewhere along the line, Resource and Development Committee, allocate water for us so we can provide for our rangeland, farmland, and so on," stated Many Farms Chapter president Katherine O. Arthur.

Other TCOB responsibilities include the maintenance of irrigation water facilities such as, livestock earthen dams, windmills, storage tanks, water lines, water wells, pumping stations, and irrigation canals. The Navajo Nation currently has hundreds of miles of water lines and six irrigation systems.

"We do plan on repairing all the windmills, but it all depends on the availability of the funding, staff, and equipment," stated Tariq, who also mentioned that the primary objectives are to repair existing water facilities and to maintain existing equipment.

RDC member Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake) voiced his concern regarding water conditions on the Navajo Nation.

"I saw water running over at Thoreau, through Whitehorse, and all the way down the arroyo. And that water is probably in the upper part of the Grand Canyon. By next week it will be in Phoenix. In the meantime, we have no conservative effort. This is why we need to go to zero-based budgeting. Start from anew. Why? Let's fund the needs of the Navajo people," stated Delegate Tsosie.

According to the report, approximately 70% of the 900 windmills need extensive repairs. However, the funding process for the rehabilitation projects is not yet complete.

Also in attendance was Speaker Johnny Naize (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood) who represents the community of Many Farms.

"As you heard, the Many Farms irrigation canals are not being repaired and the concern of not having enough water. The current farming area I believe is about less than 10 percent. What I wanted to ask this committee is I would really like to concentrate on Many Farms at this time," stated Speaker Naize.

At the conclusion of the discussion, RDC members voted 4-0 to accept the report.

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